

I oppose media concentration!

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In promoting its supposed goals of fair competition, diversity and local voice in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should, at the very minimum, retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of the huge, dominant companies and players in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate, or even attempt to demonstrate, the negative effects that media deregulation and consolidation have had on the diversity of our media. While there may indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented has been severely limited.

The right to conduct an informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was renewed in the marketplace of diverse ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge and consolidate further, our ability to have an open, informed discussion from a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is important that the Commission take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

As a professor and researcher, I have followed the community service record of black/urban radio, in particular independently black-owned black radio. Recently, I completed my dissertation on KJLH-FM - Stevie Wonder's station in South Central Los Angeles. I believe that his station - and other stations like it - demonstrate the significance of localism, as well as the need to increase localism via independent ownership. Indeed, Mr. Wonder said as much when invited to speak at a 1999 FCC hearing on localism.

Further media consolidation will only work against these owners as well as the local interests and concerns represented by these independent outlets. The American people need to fully participate in any discussions of media consolidation. Most of the American public have not been involved in such discussions. A national dialogue needs to be established across the airwaves to discuss such important matters. It would appear that some members of the government are willing to turn over the public airwaves to a handful of large corporations. But, it is within your power to reverse this trend.

May God Bless you, and I pray that you make the right decision.

Thank you,

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